

English 320 (Shakespeare on Film)

Because the speed at which we cover material in this class is partly a function of how class discussion proceeds, I do not know for sure how many plays and films we will study, but at present I plan to study the following works:

Richard III (the McKellen film)
Twelfth Night (Trevor Nunn film)
Henry V (the Branagh film)
Macbeth (Polanski film)
The Taming of the Shrew (Actors' from the London Stage Production)
Much Ado About Nothing (Branagh film)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Hoffman film)
The Merchant of Venice (Radford film)

I also hope to study one of the following plays and films, if we have time:

Hamlet (Zefirelli film)
Othello (Parker film)

Whatever plays and films I choose, however, I plan to teach each play as a text (and a script) first, and then to study the films of these plays in an effort to understand the choices the film-makers have made in adapting Shakespeare's play to the screen. We will also be studying one play, The Taming of the Shrew, without seeing any film of it, when the Actors from the London Stage perform it on campus in March. In this course, then, we will be concerned with studying both Shakespeare's plays and (with Shrew excepted) what happens to those plays in the hands of a creative film-maker.

Students will be expected to write three essays in the class and, in addition, to keep a journal of each day's reading or viewing assignment. These journals are mandatory and will be collected in class without prior warning. Though these journals will not receive specific grades, they matter, and students who do not keep them up to date will have to drop the course. I also expect students to attend class regularly and to participate actively in class discussions.

Grades in this course will be based on quality (and improvement) of written work. Some attention will also be paid to the quality of a student's participation in class discussions.

Due dates for papers:

~~Friday, January 18—four-page paper due~~
~~Friday, February 22—eight-to-ten-page paper due~~
~~Wednesday, April 23—final project due~~